

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-12 and 20-34 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by *Thrap* (US 6,806,686). The rejections are fully traversed below. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested based on the following remarks.

Claims 1, 5, 6, 20, 24, and 25 have been amended. New claims 33-35 have been added. Support for the amendments and new claims can be found in the original claims. Claims 2-4, 7, 21-23, and 26 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, claims 1, 5, 6, 8-12, 20, 24, 25, and 27-35 are now pending in this application.

PATENTABILITY OF CLAIMS 1-12 AND 20-34 UNDER 35 U.S.C. 102(e)

Claim 1 pertains to a module having inductor-free circuitry for controlling voltage imbalances between a pair of capacitors connected in a series arrangement. The module requires among other things: "wherein an end of the feedback loop is connected between the output and the current limiting resistor." (E.g., See Fig. 1A) Claim 20 relates to a method for controlling voltage imbalances between a pair of capacitors connected in a series arrangement and includes similar limitations as in claim 1 but in method format.

In contrast, the cited art fails to teach or suggest a module configured in the manner claimed. In particular, Fig. 2 (which the Examiner cited) of *Thrap* discloses having the end of the feedback loop (not labeled, but contains element 40) connected between current limiting resistor 38 and capacitors 12/14. Nowhere in *Thrap* is there any mention of having the end of the feedback loop connected between the output (of the op amp 34) and the current limiting resistor 38. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 1 and 20 are patentably distinct from the cited art.

Claim 6 pertains to a module having inductor-free circuitry for controlling voltage imbalances between a pair of capacitors connected in a series arrangement. The module requires among other things: "wherein the active element is a switched voltage converter that incorporates a flying capacitor." (E.g., See Fig. 1B) Claim 25 relates to a method for controlling voltage imbalances between a pair of capacitors connected in a series arrangement and includes similar limitations as in claim 6 but in method format.

In contrast, the cited art fails to teach or suggest a module configured in the manner claimed. In particular, Fig. 4 (which the Examiner cited) of *Thrap* discloses having transistors 152 and 154 as part of a gain stage 150. Nowhere in *Thrap* or in Fig. 4 is there any mention of having a flying capacitor. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 6 and 25 are patentably distinct from the cited art.

The Examiner's rejections of the dependent claims are respectfully traversed. However, to expedite prosecution, all of these claims will not be argued separately. Claims 5, 8-12, 24 and 27-32 each depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 1, 6, 20 or 25 and, therefore, are respectfully submitted to be patentable over cited art for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1, 6, 20 or 25. Further, the dependent claims require additional elements that when considered in context of the claimed inventions further patentably distinguish the invention from the cited art.

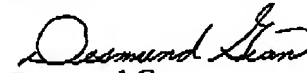
For example, claim 12 requires that "wherein the first and second modules' circuitry overlap across a common capacitor shared by the two pairs of capacitors." See Figure 3 of *Thrap* vs. Figure 2 of the present application.

SUMMARY

It is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are allowable and that this case is now in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

If any fees are due in connection with the filing of this Amendment, the Commissioner is authorized to deduct such fees from the undersigned's Deposit Account No. 50-0388 (Order No. PWRSP009).

Respectfully submitted,
BEYER WEAVER & THOMAS, LLP


Desmond Gean
Reg. No. 52,937

BEYER WEAVER & THOMAS, LLP
P.O. Box 70250
Oakland, CA 94612-0250
Telephone: (510) 663-1100
Facsimile: (510) 663-0920

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